

DUTIES THAT ARE NEGATIVE

By Keith Greer

“See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant.” {Jeremiah 1:10} God gives His children certain duties; some are negative; others are positive. Let us examine both sides of the proposition. On the negative side, we must oppose:

Error. *“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.” {Ephesians 5:11,12}* We oppose error because it’s a danger to our souls. Since God has no fellowship with sin, if another person attempts to lead me down a path of error, I must reject it at the onset.

Societies. *“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.” {Proverbs 16:25}* In the past, some of our brethren introduced different types of societies, i.e., orphan homes, retirement homes, and missionary societies, in addition to the church. Such departures brought division and strife among God’s people. What caused the problem? God did not authorize His church to fund such organizations. {Colossians 3:17} The Lord’s church is a spiritual kingdom, which has a divine, spiritual work.

Creeds. *“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” {Jude 3}* God gave only one Divine book, and He gave it only once! Human creeds, philosophies, wise sayings, and traditions do not necessarily equal truth. Human authority does not supplant God’s divine will!

Instrumental Music. *“Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” {Ephesians 5:19}* Our opposition to the addition of mechanical instruments to the worship service perplexes many people in the religious world. There’s a very simple reason—the Bible contains no authority for their use during worship. All nine New-Testament passages that discuss music in worship say the same thing—SING!

Vain Worship. *“These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” {Matthew 15:8,9}* Unfortunately, in the present religious culture, there is an ever-deepening search for new invocations for the worship services. The thing prompting this search is the demand to appease the desires of the people in the pews. A tragic truth has been forgotten—we worship to please God, not ourselves. {Galatians 1:10}

Worldly Lust. *“Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” {Colossians 3:5}* The devil surrounds us with temptations to feed our fleshly lusts. But God’s people must use self-control and keep these appetites in check. Listen to the apostle John’s words, *“For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world.” {1 John 2:16}*

Conforming to the world's standards. *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."* {Romans 12:1,2}

Two standards are in the world—God's and the world's. World's standard changes as the thinking of men change. God's standard is constant and unchangeable. We can teach it to our kids because the truths revealed to them, to live by and structure their lives by, will be the same one they will teach their kids.

God has given His children these and other negative commands to enable us to maintain pure souls and avoid the paths of spiritual harm. Yes, the world does not agree and has their own set of rules, values and standards. Satan and his adversaries would lead you to believe that God is holding us back and making our lives one of misery. Just remember this God cannot lie—anything God tells us could be harmful to us—will be! Are you listening to Him? ***